

SEALIFT

The U.S. Navy's Military Sealift Command

October 2001

Bringing Comfort to New York City

Richard Perry photo, courtesy of The New York Times



Hospital ship USNS Comfort rounds the tip of Manhattan Friday evening, Sept. 14, as smoke billows from Ground Zero — where the World Trade Center twin towers used to jut into the Manhattan skyline prior to the Sept. 11 terrorist attack that toppled the two towers and surrounding buildings.

By Bridget Morris and
Cristina McGlew

As USNS Comfort rounded the smoking tip of Manhattan, the twin towers of the World Trade Center were conspicuously absent. The acrid smell of burning metal permeated the air while a fighter jet flew overhead, and police boats escorted the ship. The sun sank behind the skyline, and hundreds of flickering candles could be seen lining the docks along the Hudson as the people of New York gathered for candlelit vigils.

Military Sealift Command's USNS Comfort docked at pier 92 in New York City Sept. 14, not really sure what to expect. The crew of about 300 Navy medical personnel and 61 civilian mariners had the surreal experience of coming into New York City just three days after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

"The twin towers are actually a

navigational landmark on my charts," said Second Mate Sean Tortora, Comfort's navigator and a native New Yorker. "When I took the charts out in Baltimore, I was struck by the fact that they are no longer there."

Under orders from the Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Comfort departed Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J., at 3 p.m. on Sept. 14 for New York City. Comfort's mission was changed from providing medical assistance and support to the people of New York City to providing logistics and support services.

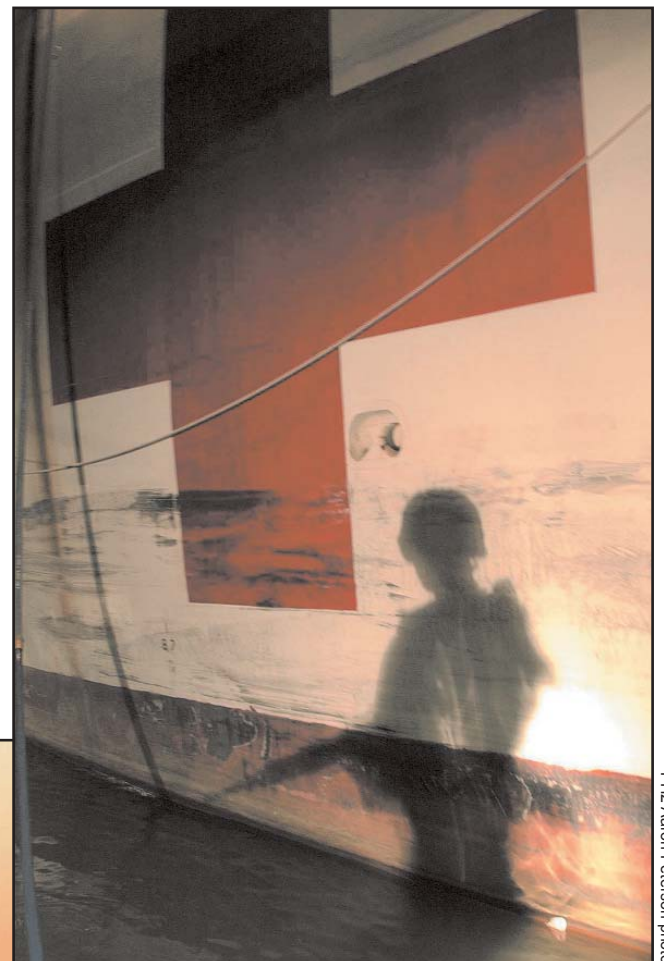
Demonstrating flexibility and "can do" spirit, Comfort personnel worked quickly to convert the hospital ship from a medical and surgical facility to a logistics support facility. Comfort received orders to change missions at 1:30 p.m.; by 3 p.m., about 450 medical and support personnel had packed, disembarked and boarded buses to return to their commands.

"Our mission never really changed," said Capt. Ed Nanar-towich, master of USNS Comfort. "We're here to help the people of New York any way we can."

About 300 Navy personnel remained aboard Comfort providing food and laundry services and performing the many other tasks required to support hundreds of guests each night, in addition to providing a hot meal to the steady stream of emergency relief personnel and official visitors that trekked on

and off the ship around the clock. Comfort pulled pier-side in mid-

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PH2 Aaron Peterson photo

JO1 Preston Keres photo



Above: The silhouette of a U.S. Marine is seen on the side of hospital ship USNS Comfort. The Marines provided security for Comfort during her stay in New York City from Sept. 14 to Oct. 1.

Left: Comfort passes the Statue of Liberty en route to Manhattan to provide assistance to the emergency relief personnel working after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

Post terror – returning to “normal”

Sept. 11 was a moment of true terror. We all felt it: the horror and emotional pain, the angst and uncertainty. But our response to that day is what's really important. President Bush, Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Attorney General Ashcroft have demonstrated stalwart leadership during this crisis. Their leadership has certainly been reassuring. Now, we must confront this vicious enemy with the same resolve as our forebearers.

A symbol of hope

We sailed USNS Comfort to Manhattan, providing comfort to weary rescue and recovery workers at Ground Zero. Comfort was a visible symbol of strength and hope. Her brilliant white hull berthed against the smoke-darkened Manhattan skyline said, “We’re here. We’ll back you up. We will recover.”

Navy Hospital Corpsman Jennelle Armstrong aboard Comfort told about an ironworker who came aboard. He’d been working at Ground Zero for three days without sleep.

“When he walked through the door I noticed that his eyes were redder than any I’ve ever seen before,” said Jennelle. “He didn’t have any clothes with him, and he was clutching one of our flyers in his hand. He asked if we had a bed for him so he could rest for a while. I told him he would be welcome as long as we’re here.”

The spirit of Comfort and MSC provided tranquility and solace for our weary fellow Americans in Manhattan.

With Comfort, we made a difference.

A matter of duty

Lt. Chris Anderson, a staff briefer at headquarters, was at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, N.Y., attending a sealift training program on Sept. 11. He was headed for class that morning when he heard about the attacks. Chris, along with academy staff, midshipmen and others, volunteered for duty through the academy’s sailing center, providing launch and ferry service for police, firefighters and FBI personnel to and from Manhattan and other points in New Jersey, Staten Island and Brooklyn. Chris worked three nights, taking classes during the day.

“It was my duty to help,” said Chris. “I was doing what I’m trained for, know best and love to do.”

That, too, is the spirit of MSC. Chris Andersen made a difference.

Returning to normal

A terrorist attack is, by definition, filled with terror. Because of the attacks on Sept. 11, we are all changed a little. But, now President Bush has urged us to focus on returning to normal, although “normal” has changed a little, too.

We are all a little more aware of our surroundings and what others around us are doing. We willingly spend the extra time it takes to come to work or catch a commercial flight because of heightened security procedures. All these things are different, but rapidly becoming normal.

Civilian Mariner Leadership Council

At MSC, normal means continuing to work for our people around the world. In mid-October, we held our latest Civilian Mariner Leadership Council meeting in San Diego. The agenda included a personal development program for every CIVMAR, one of my top priorities.

One way to advance yourself and your career is via Navy E-Learning, the Navy’s electronic learning program. It’s a series of courses available over the web to Sailors and Navy civilian employees, including CIVMARs. The courses cover a variety of subjects and can be reviewed at www.navylearning.com.

Navy/Marine Corps Intranet

Normal also means advancing the Navy-Marine Corps Intranet. On Oct. 1, the Information Strike Force (the umbrella term for the NMCI contractor and its subcontractors) took over responsibility for MSC computer systems at headquarters. This mostly administrative move was repeated for MSC Pacific on Oct. 15 and is scheduled for MSC Atlantic Nov. 1.

Secretary of the Navy Gordon England has told us, “NMCI will be an essential ingredient in the ability of our business organizations to be efficient



and effective, providing value and capability for warfighters.”

NMCI is an incredible challenge, one that requires commitment from all of us.

Change will always happen. That’s normal. Challenge is part of change. That’s where MSC excels!

God bless MSC and America!

D.L. Brewer III
D.L. Brewer III
Rear Admiral, U.S. Navy
Commander, Military Sealift Command

Merchant mariners: doing their part

By Terri T. Cheng

Neither life experience nor education can put into words what it feels like to be an American today. As an American watching the news unfold on Sept. 11, I felt hurt in my heart.

Born in 1971, little has happened in my lifetime that compares with the events of Sept. 11. I have read about and seen celluloid footage of World War I and II, the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the assassination of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King Jr. More recently, I saw Desert Storm unfold on my TV. Even in the latter situation, I was still simply a spectator in wars fought far away from the United States.

Growing up, I liked punk rock, the idea of an anarchist state and black lipstick. Those were my teenage years; the crazy ideas I got then were thankfully erased by life experience and education. In America, it’s okay to voice negative sentiment about your government. Ironically, being able to execute my First Amendment rights as a teenager eventually led me into wanting to serve my government as an adult.

After the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., I have been thinking about what I can do to help my country. I could give blood. I could donate money and supplies. I could volunteer locally for humanitarian

causes. And then it hit me . . . I am a merchant mariner. As a civilian mariner, my job directly supports healing the collective hurt from the loss of countless lives. As merchant mariners, we are singularly effective since we are among those who represent and help defend the values of fellow Americans.

There is a certain sense of silent nobility in our history. In 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the mass production of liberty ships and established the U.S. Maritime Service to train the individuals needed to operate the ships. At that time, the USMS was the only racially integrated service. During World War II, USMS had the second highest per capita loss ratio of any service, second only to the Marine Corps. Yet for some reason or other, merchant mariners have never been fully recognized. Casualties from World War II are immense, more than 600 mariners were prisoners of war, and thousands were wounded or permanently crippled.

We remember the contributions of the U.S. Merchant Marine every year on Maritime Day. However, it is widely acknowledged that merchant mariners are not given the same recognition as the regular Navy, despite the importance and sacrifice made by mariners both historically and presently.

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote, in her daily

newspaper column ‘My Day,’

“There is one thing I have been meaning to write about for a good many days. It is the Bill of Rights before Congress to extend to the men of the Merchant Marine certain rights, that now belong exclusively to the men in the naval service . . . It seems unfair that these Merchant Seamen, who were all volunteers and who, in proportion to their numbers, lost more men in the war than any other branch of our fighting services. Over 1,500 merchant ships were lost and over 6,000 Merchant Seamen were lost or taken prisoner during the war.”

We deserve more recognition and rights for the work we do, yet despite this we carry on in a difficult and demanding job not many people understand or recognize. However, as I remember the nameless heroes presently in New York and Washington working day and night to excavate the ruins, I realize recognition matters little. I am just proud to do whatever I can in righting the wrong inflicted upon my fellow Americans. The hurt is in my heart, but as a merchant mariner, I am doing what I believe in for the country I believe in, and this helps the pain go away.

Terri T. Cheng is a Radio Electronics Technician Second Class aboard USNS Guadalupe.

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Printed on recycled paper

New commander takes MSC Atlantic helm

By Bill Cook

"It seems the past two years have truly flown by," said Vice Adm. Gordon Holder, USN, then Commander, Military Sealift Command, and keynote speaker at the Aug. 24 Military Sealift Command Atlantic change of command ceremony. "But they have been good years, innovative years!"

In the mid-morning shadow of USNS Saturn, Vice Adm. Holder explained to the 250 people gathered that in a world where international relations are sometimes tension-filled, the smooth transition of military leadership is vital.

"It shows any potential aggressor that we're here, we're ready and we mean business!" declared Vice Adm. Holder.

Vice Adm. Holder wasted no time before honoring the many accomplishments of the departing commodore, Capt. Mary Jo Sweeney, USN, such as developing the model methodology for scrutinizing the command for MSC's new triennial command assessment program; activation of the MSC Office Beaumont, Texas, and consolidating that operation with that of the closing office in Panama.

Vice Adm. Holder also acknowledged Capt. Sweeney's development of a better partnership with local U.S. Naval Reserve units; spearheading an initiative that resulted in more than two dozen officers of the Merchant Marine Individual Ready Reserve Group completing afloat tours and annual training aboard MSC ships; and cross-decking first-term Sailors serving aboard MSC ships with Navy combatants during deployments and transits wherever possible to enable them to get a better understanding of Navy life.

"When it comes to providing maritime solutions, M.J. is at the top of the list," said Vice Adm. Holder. "Well done, M.J.!"

Using her well known wit and good humor to punctuate the importance of the ceremony, Capt. Sweeney likened the event to an Irish wake. "Two years ago when I was the incoming commander, my role was like that of the body at an Irish wake," Capt. Sweeney recounted. "The deceased was required to be there but not to say much!"

"But I'm not the incoming CO today, so I am actually expected to say a bit more, but I am soon required to become the dearly departed," joked Capt. Sweeney. "In that spirit, I would just say that to love what you do and sense that it matters — how could anything be more fun?"

A more solemn Capt. Sweeney then underscored her equally well-known command philosophy — the ability to take bad news and to make MSC a place where every employee could do their best work with examples of how the MSC team pulled together to create success upon success.

"I wanted communication to flow upward, and you trusted me to do that," Capt. Sweeney said. "That has been one of the secrets underlying the many successes this command has achieved, that you have achieved."

Recounting a poignant moment of her command, Capt. Sweeney told of her first visits to MSC ships, many with bulkheads adorned with pictures designed to comfort and remind the crews of home and the loved ones they left behind. These images helped the mariners during long voyages, bad weather and dangerous evolutions.

"Then and there I made a point to obtain a picture of the opposite image to hang above my desk," Capt. Sweeney remembered. "This print showed a lonely, rough sea with threatening storm clouds overhead — its beauty dark and dangerous."



Vice Adm. Gordon Holder, USN, then Commander, Military Sealift Command (center), flanked on the left by Capt. M.J. Sweeney, outgoing MSC Atlantic commander, and on the right by Capt. J.A. Carlton, USN, incoming MSC Atlantic commander, honor the colors as the national anthem is played at the Aug. 24 change of command ceremony in Norfolk, Va. Vice Adm. Holder was relieved by Rear Adm. David L. Brewer III, USN, the following week.

"On difficult days I would look at that print to remind myself what our mariners were facing at sea, and that always gave me perspective," Capt. Sweeney mused. "That print reminded me why we are here — to support the ships at sea."

Before reading her orders, the departing captain once again honored her workforce, "Oh, and one last thought before I leave, I have done nothing. WE have done everything."

Following time-honored Navy rules dating back to 1865, the change of command took place with the brief words, "I relieve you Ma'am," and Capt. J. A. Carlton, USN., assumed the mantle of MSC Atlantic leadership.

Capt. Carlton warmly greeted her new workforce and provided highlights of her own naval career. "For someone who came into the Navy intending to do only four years, this is quite an event," the new MSC Atlantic commander remarked. "The Navy just kept offering me things I couldn't turn down, and more than 20 years later, here I am still!"

Capt. Carlton cited many years of experience with Military Sealift Command, sometimes in places many mainstream Navy personnel never think about — Okinawa, New Orleans, Singapore.

"The two brief tours I have had away since I began with MSC only served to emphasize what a distinct community this is," she said. "I have learned many times over that the Sailors, civilians and mariners that make up this organization are the finest group of professionals you could ever hope to work with and work for."

"In the past, when taking over a command or reporting to a new assignment, I have always felt a sense of anxiety and apprehension — this was something new, something unknown, something scary," explained Capt. Carlton. "I don't feel that way this time because of your reputation and the care and welcome you offered me. You are a great bunch of people doing a great job."

"It's good to be home," MSC

Atlantic's new commodore concluded.

Born and raised in Lynchburg, Va., Capt. Carlton graduated from the College of William and Mary in 1977. She received her commission from the Naval Officer Candidate School, Newport, R.I., in 1978. She then attended Surface Warfare Officers School there and was later assigned as assistant officer in charge, Navigation Aids Support Unit, Fort Story, Va.

Capt. Carlton became one of the first women assigned to sea duty when she reported aboard USS Vulcan as the administrative officer and then as First Lieutenant that same year. In 1981 she became the assistant force personnel officer on the staff of Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, where she served through 1983.

Immediately following that assignment, Capt. Carlton was assigned as executive officer of Military Sealift Command Office Okinawa, Japan. Following that assignment, she transferred to MSC headquarters.

She assumed concurrent duties commanding MSCO New Orleans, La., and acting executive officer of Fast Sealift Squadron One in 1989. Capt. Carlton served with these units for the duration of the Gulf War.

Upon completion of that assignment, Capt. Carlton was ordered to MSC Southeast Asia as chief staff officer in 1991. There, she was instrumental in the planning and execution of the withdrawal of U.S. Forces from the Philippines and the establishment of the relocated MSC Western Pacific Detachment in Singapore, where she reported in 1992 as its first officer in charge.

In 1993 Carlton transferred to the staff of the Commander in Chief, U.S. Transportation Command, where she served as a functional requirements analyst through mid-1996. She then assumed command of MSCO Southwest Asia in Bahrain. In 1998 she reported to the staff of the Naval Inspector General as a member of the inspections division, serving as branch chief and team leader for area visits and command inspections.



Capt. M.J. Sweeney, USN (left), and Capt. J.A. Carlton, USN (background center), greet well wishers during the reception that followed the MSC Atlantic change of command ceremony.

Bill Cook photos

Comfort in NYC

Right: Sailors aboard USNS Comfort form a human chain to take on supplies during Operation Noble Eagle. Comfort deployed to New York City in response to the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

Below: Lt. Cmdr. Steve Olive, USN, a doctor aboard Comfort (right), tends to an emergency relief worker with the aid of HMSN Russell Berry, USN. During the ship's stay in New York City, medical personnel aboard Comfort treated about 30 to 60 patients a day in the sickbay facility.



PH2 Aaron Peterson photo



PH2 Aaron Peterson photo

Below: MA2 Deborah Appelbaum, USN, stands guard at USNS Comfort in New York City.



J02 Ellen Maurer photo

Continued from page 1

town Manhattan about 8 p.m. and prepared to provide lodging, food and laundry services to the fire fighters and emergency personnel working in the disaster recovery efforts in New York City.

"Everyone aboard the ship has been wonderful to us," said Kenya Marquez Peña, a search and rescue worker from Mexico City, Mexico, staying aboard. "Now we can concentrate on what we came to do."

The group of rescue workers from Mexico, called the Rescate Topos, or Rescue Moles, paid their own way on

the first flight allowed out of Mexico City to help their "North American brothers and sisters." The group used Comfort as a base to recharge after spending as much as two days burrowing through the rubble in search of survivors, remains and any means of identifying them.

"The people on this ship are amazing," said New York City Police Officer Kevin O'Keeffe. "When we first came on board someone escorted us to the galley. It was like they rolled the red carpet out for us."

By the time Comfort sailed Oct. 1 to return to Baltimore, the ship had served 17,000 meals to New York City police

and firefighters, National Guardsmen, New York State Militia and volunteer relief workers from around the world. The ship had also provided berthing for 2,300 guests and cleaned 4,400 pounds of personal laundry for rescue workers.

The ship's clinic saw more than 560 guests for cuts, respiratory ailments,

fractures and other minor injuries. Comfort's team of Navy psychology personnel provided 500 mental health consultations to relief workers. Comfort also hosted a group of volunteer New York area massage therapists who gave nearly 1,400 medical massages to ship guests.

Just prior to the ship's departure Oct. 1, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani spoke over the ship's sound system on behalf of a grateful New York City to thank the Comfort team for all their support.

As Comfort departed, the Navy medical personnel and the Marine Corps security force aboard manned the rails wearing New York City Police Department and New York City Fire Department baseball caps as Lee Greenwood's "Proud to be an American" played over the ship's loudspeaker. Onlookers on the pier cheered and waved and yelled "thank you" as harbor tugs maneuvered the ship into the Hudson River. Comfort arrived in Baltimore about 6 p.m. Tuesday, proud to have assisted New York City during its time of need.

For more information about Comfort's mission in New York, please visit the MSC website at www.msc.navy.mil.

Denebola helps out at Staten Island

By Bridget Morris
Military Sealift Command's USNS Denebola sat at The Sul-livans pier in Staten Island, N.Y., ready to load equipment and supplies and sail to faraway places to defend the United States. Never did the Fast Sealift Ship's crew imagine that America would need the ship's help just across the harbor in gleaming downtown Manhattan.

Capt. Robert Fay was, ironically, at an antiterrorism class Tues., Sept. 11, at Fort Dix, N.J., when his class was interrupted and he learned of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. Capt. Fay, master of USNS Denebola and a native New Yorker, immediately returned to the ship. By noon, he was back at Denebola and could see the horror just across the harbor.

"I delivered sandwiches to the peo-

ple building the World Trade Center as a kid and later worked there," Capt. Fay said. "It's mind-boggling."

The pier facility where Denebola was berthed became the site of the Staten Island command center, and Fay and his crew saw their opportunity to help. The command center was providing lodging and food to about 150 to 250 personnel daily, but they were running out of room, so Denebola's crew volunteered to house some of the overflow. In her current reduced-operating status, Denebola has a small maintenance crew aboard, but she has 35 additional staterooms to hold all the crew that would be on board if the ship were fully activated.

On Friday night, Denebola hosted 65 New York firefighters aboard — some of whom had been on the job for 48 hours before their arrival. The crew doubled up in staterooms and

people bunked in the lounges.

"The firefighters' faces were blank as they boarded the ship," said Capt. Fay. "They described ground zero as a war zone of nothing but body parts."

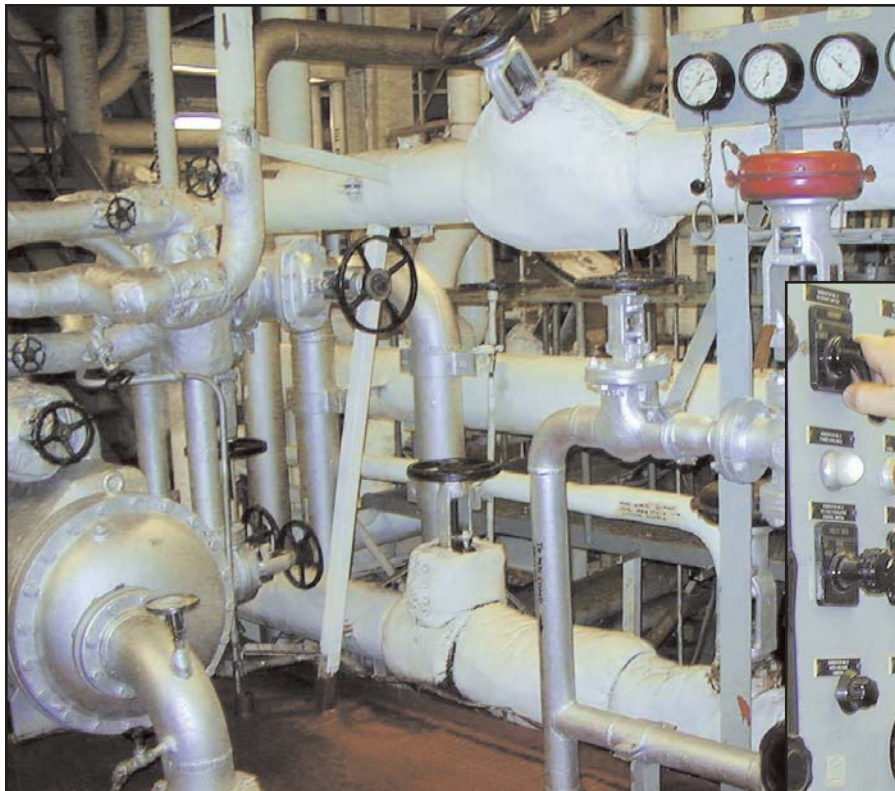
Capt. Fay lost one of his own friends in the blast — a firefighter among those first on the scene.

"We've been standing here watching helplessly across the harbor, so it feels good to help," Capt. Fay said.

Aside from the firefighters, Denebola's crew provided limited berthing and shower facilities to personnel from the New Jersey Army National Guard. The Guardsmen were providing transportation and security to the Staten Island landfill, where debris is being taken.

Through Tues., Sept. 18, the ship supported about 100 emergency relief personnel.

From zero to go in less than 24 hours



Left: This is just a glimpse of the engine room aboard hospital ship USNS Comfort. The engine room is about eight stories high. The boilers are three stories high, and each holds ten tons of water.

Below: First Engineer Steve Starr works in the engine room aboard Comfort. According to Chief Engineer Don Skurka, "The seven-man reduced-operating-status crew's focus on ship readiness was the sole reason we could get underway in less than 24 hours. Steve Starr deserves all the credit."



Bridget Morris photos

By Bridget Morris

Imagine two, three-story high, steel containers each holding ten tons of water.

Now imagine trying to heat the water inside each to 930 degrees Fahrenheit, more than 700 degrees hotter than the boiling point, and to a pressure of 850 pounds per square inch.

That's just one of the many challenges that the engineers aboard hospital ship USNS Comfort faced Sept. 11.

Comfort is maintained in five-day reduced operating status in Baltimore, Md., meaning that the ship can be fully crewed and ready to sail within five days. While in reduced operating status, Comfort has a civilian mariner

crew of 18, seven of whom make up the engineering department.

Sept. 11 began as a routine day aboard the hospital ship. Each member of the engineering department was completing his normal duties. Then everything changed.

At 8:42 a.m., terrorists attacked the World Trade Center; a second plane attacked shortly thereafter; and both towers of the World Trade Center collapsed within two hours of the initial attack. First Assistant Engineer Steve Starr and his crew were as shocked and immobilized as the rest of America as news began pouring in foretelling a death toll in the thousands. Then the engineering team began to prepare.

Starr, Chief Mate Jim White and Navy Cmdr. Bess Harrahill, USN, the officer in charge of the 58 Navy medical personnel aboard Comfort when the ship is in reduced operating status, met at 10 a.m. to discuss the as-yet unmentioned possibility of Comfort being activated to assist New York City. The three decided to start preparing the ship just in case the call came.

"The ship was scheduled to perform dock trials the following week," explained Starr, "so I began preparing the ship to run on her own steam, figuring that even if we weren't activated, I had just gotten a head start on the following week."

In reduced operating status, the ship is connected to shoreside power. The boilers that power the 24,500 horsepower steam engine are totally filled with water; dehumidifiers are connected to the main engine; and the ship's salt water and potable water tanks are empty. All this and more had to be addressed before the ship could get underway.

Starr and his crew of six immediately began draining the extra water from the boilers. They also disconnected the dehumidifiers from the main engine and began filling the salt water and potable water systems.

At around 2 p.m., Starr received notice that the ship had indeed received activation orders from the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet.

His crew's proactive efforts had just gained the ship three critical hours.

Taking barely a breath, Starr read the activation order then returned to work; his sense of urgency even greater. While he and his six co-workers continued to prepare all engineering systems, MSC scrambled to find civilian mariner volunteers to fill the 15 additional engineering billets necessary to sail the ship, including the position of chief engineer.

The new chief engineer, Don Skurka, arrived aboard Comfort at about 9:15 p.m. after driving up to Baltimore from Virginia Beach, Va., where he was on vacation. By the time he arrived, the engineering crew already had the boilers warmed up.

"The seven-man, reduced-operating-status crew's focus on ship readiness was the sole reason we could get underway in less than 24 hours," said Skurka. "Steve Starr deserves all the credit."

The engineering crew steadily grew in size as personnel began arriving around 6 p.m., but Starr remained on site working through the night. The ship was ready to sail by 10 a.m. the next morning — four days earlier than her five-day requirement. She received the order to sail from the Navy's Atlantic Fleet and was underway just after 3 p.m.

Of course, for the engineering department the work was just beginning. A ship that has been in reduced operating status and is activated rapidly usually has a few tricks up her sleeve for the engineering department, and Comfort definitely had a few.

"Steve's intimate knowledge of the ship from bow to stern and all engineering systems aboard was critical in fixing the minor, but numerous engineering casualties," said Skurka.

Comfort docked at Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J., at about 2:30 a.m., Fri., Sept. 14, to load additional med-

ical supplies and Navy personnel. While in port, the ship was informed that her mission had changed from medical support to New York City to logistical support to the rescue workers. The ship quickly adjusted, off-loading about 450 Navy medical personnel and getting underway at about 3 p.m. Comfort docked at pier 92 in Manhattan at about 8 p.m. that night.

Throughout all of Comfort's rapidly evolving scenarios, the engineering department continued to address all engineering issues that arose. Upon arrival in Manhattan, the engineers connected the ship to the pier's water supply and completed activating all piping systems in the berthing compartment to support the possibility of housing 2,000 rescue workers.

"By Saturday morning, the majority of the engineering department had been awake for about five days," said Skurka. "But the cause was worth it."

Once the ship arrived in Manhattan, the engineers had a more regular schedule.

"We're receiving the plumbing, drains and heating/ventilation systems trouble calls we receive on any mission," said Starr.

By the end of the mission, the ship had served 17,000 meals to rescue workers and relief-support personnel, cleaned more than 4,000 pounds of personal laundry and housed about 2,300 rescue workers.

"I'm very proud of Military Sealift Command and the Medical Treatment Facility," said Starr.

USNS Comfort returned to Baltimore at 6 p.m. on Tues., Oct. 2, to Pier 11 where Starr's wife, Chrystina Starr, waited on the pier with their two young children. Starr's 10-month-old son, Connor, appeared ready to follow in his father's footsteps, waiting to meet his father in a jumper embroidered with the words "Jr. Engineer."



Chrystina Starr, wife of First Engineer Steve Starr, waits for Comfort's arrival at pier 11 with their two children, Caitlyn and Connor, Oct. 2 at Baltimore, Md.

USNS Sirius hosts diplomats

By Edward Baxter

During a port call at Tunis, Tunisia, USNS Sirius hosted the U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia, defense attachés representing eight countries, and senior Tunisian military.

On Aug. 13, ship's master Capt. William Thomas and military department officer-in-charge Cmdr. Mike Robinson, USN, hosted defense attachés from Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Germany, China, Spain, Greece, Italy and Russia.

Robinson briefed the group on the ship's mission and capabilities, while the master led them on a guided tour. Assigned in Tunis, the attachés are their nation's primary military representatives and liaisons to the host country.

"The guests were shown the main deck cargo handling area, a 'spare parts' cargo hold, a provisions cargo hold, the bridge, flight deck and hangar

areas," Cmdr. Robinson said.

Next up was an evening reception honoring U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Rust Deming. More than 60 attended the two-hour reception on the ship's flight deck. Sirius' Supply Officer Rachel Gill and Chief Steward Billy Speer planned and organized the reception.

"I have never been on a ship like this, and it was absolutely great to show the rest of the diplomatic community our capability to support our ships and personnel ashore," Ambassador Deming said.

Senior Tunisian military officers included an air force colonel-major, Tunisia's director of international cooperation, a navy captain, Tunisia's current defense attaché to Morocco, an army colonel-major, the commander of the Tunisian military command and staff college, and the chief of the for-

eign liaison office.

Sirius is a combat stores ship operating in the Mediterranean supporting the U.S. Sixth Fleet. These ships not only resupply U.S. Navy warships at sea, they also routinely resupply U.S. embassies and consulates. Sirius has a commercial contract heavy-lift helicopter embarked to carry vital supplies quickly to other ships.

Tunisia, comparative in size to the



U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Rust Deming boards the ship flanked by Sailors from USNS Sirius.

state of Georgia, is located in north Africa between Algeria and Libya.

Leadership changes hands at MPSRON Three

By JO2 Melody D. Scalfone

Relieved Capt. William D. Daniels, USN, USN, Commander, Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron Three, during a change of command ceremony Sept. 5 on board MV 1st Lt. Jack Lummus while the ship was at anchor in Apra Harbor, Guam.

"It's a great day, but it's also a day tinged with a sense of loss for one squadron and a great commander," said Military Sealift Command Far East Commanding Officer Capt. Douglas Wayne Harris, USN, the guest speaker. "It's also a day marked with great joy . . . for a man ready to jump into a great command."

MPSRON Three is one of four squadrons designed to pre-stage U.S. military equipment and supplies at sea. The command supports the rapid deployment of a Marine Corps Air-Ground Task Force by delivering combat and logistics vehicles, fuel, ammunition, rations and supplies where needed.

"We can't do what our nation has asked us to do without those ships," said Capt. Harris. "Capt. MacIntyre has been a great leader of a strategically significant squadron. Many would like to [take command] but few are chosen. The special trust and confidence that the Navy placed in Capt. MacIntyre will be passed on to Capt. Daniels in a tradition dating back 200 years. You're absolutely the right person for a very challenging job."

The ships of MPSRON Three can move equipment and supplies to a potential or actual conflict within days.

"Capt. McIntyre has maintained the squadron at peak readiness," said Capt. Harris.

"As much as Capt. McIntyre is an excellent strategic planner, he also looks out for his Sailors and helps out the community," continued Capt. Harris.

Capt. McIntyre, in turn, attributes his successes to his Sailors.

"These folks epitomize everything that is right in this country," he said. "Today we're not just celebrating the passing of command, but the accomplishments of Sailors."

As his last act as commander, Capt. McIntyre promoted IT1 Justin E. Hopkins, USN, the command secure communications supervisor, to his present rank during the ceremony.

"In reality, we didn't do anything. We trained, we fixed and we were good ambassadors, but we didn't do anything. We didn't do anything because the prepositioned, forward-deployed strategy worked. We have a lot of firepower below our decks, but we didn't use it as it was meant to be used because of the Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Soldiers doing their job as a constant, steady deterrent to aggression. We have not had to fight here. I can say with complete pride and sense of accomplishment that we didn't do anything."

Capt. MacIntyre will report to Navy Region Southwest in San Diego as the operations officer.

Capt. Daniels comes to Guam from the Atlantic Fleet where he was the deputy director of training.

Working hard at APSRON Four

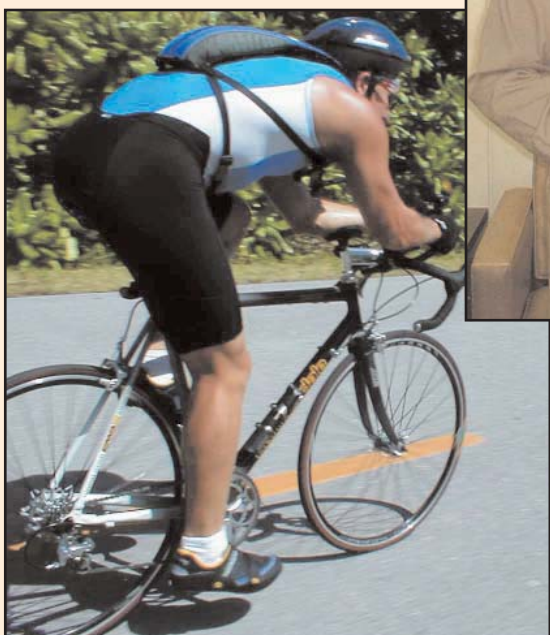
Capt. Phillip Lamonica, USN, Commander, Afloat Prepositioning Ship Squadron Four, and APSRON Four's training officer, ITC(SW) Theodore Blackmon, USN, presented ITC(SW/AW) Condon Reubeltery, USN, with her Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist pin on Aug. 2. Seven Sailors have earned their ESWS qualification under APSRON Four's ESWS Program. Capt. Lamonica also presented YN1(SW) Paula Johnson, USN, with the Sailor of the Quarter Award for superior performance as the administrative and personnel officer from April 1 to June 30. The ceremonies were held aboard APSRON

duties in a highly professional manner.

Lt.j.g. Paul Campbell, USN, currently serving as APSRON Four's staff readiness officer, set a positive example for his peers and subordinates through his dedicated efforts in preparing and successfully completing Diego Garcia's Half Ironman Triathlon. His time of five hours, 57 minutes and 20 seconds earned him a seventh-place finish individually, as well as defeat-

ing all but two of the three-person teams that entered. The race consisted of a 1.2-mile open water swim, 56 miles of cycling, and a 13.1-mile run.

Upon finishing the race, Lt. j.g. Campbell sighed painfully, "So what are we doing next weekend?"



Above: ITC(SW/AW) Condon Reubeltery, USN (right), receives her Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist pin from ITC(SW) Theodore Blackmon, USN, Afloat Prepositioning Ship Squadron Four training officer.

Left: Lt. j.g. Paul Campbell, USN, crosses the finish line at the annual Diego Garcia Half Ironman Triathlon Race in less than six hours.

HQ HIGHLIGHTS

Military Sealift Command headquarters reacted quickly to the events of Sept. 11. Staff members worked long hours to ensure the command's world-wide fleet was ready to provide support wherever and whenever it might be needed.

A number of headquarters personnel supported hospital ship USNS Comfort's activation. **Capt. John Zarkowsky, USN**, the hospital ship project manager for the Naval Fleet Auxiliary Force Program, was integral in getting the ship underway and in action. **MSCM Kevin Blade, USN**, volunteered to assist Comfort personnel plan and establish a 24-hour galley to support the New York City recovery efforts. **Marge Holtz**, the director of public affairs and two members of her staff, **Cristina McGlew** and **Bridget Morris**, were on site to provide public affairs support to the ship. **CNOMC(SW) Michael Oldknow, USN**, the MSC force master chief, provided critical on-scene support to the

ship in NYC.

Planned changes took effect in the **Operations and Plans Directorate** Aug. 27. The directorate established an expanded force protection subdivision headed by **Cmdr. Marty Bodrog, USN**. As part of that restructuring, a Naval Criminal Investigative Service agent, **John Fencsak**, joined the force protection staff permanently Oct. 1.

About 45 attendees of a week-long Defense Contract Management Agency-East conference visited **USNS Seay** Sept. 7 in Baltimore, Md. Many of the DCMA activities oversee procuring the equipment that MSC would carry in a contingency. The tour gave attendees the opportunity to see the relationship between Department of Defense equipment transportation specifications and sealift capabilities.

Teresa Smith-Morris joined the **Strategic Planning Directorate** in an upward-mobility position Oct. 9. Smith-Morris was formerly the administrative assistant for the Force Medical

Officer.

MSC bid farewell to **Sylvester Rainey, Strategic Planning Directorate; Peggy Kane, Office of Counsel; Robert Young, Sealift Program; and Brian Cassidy, Engineering Directorate.**

Welcome aboard to **Richard Myers, Operations and Plans Directorate; Mark Chadwick, Bruno Wengrowsk, Contracts and Business Management Directorate; Jamaica Tarpley, Maritime Forces and Manpower Management Directorate; and Wayne Wright, Office of Counsel.**



Bridget Morris photo

G. E. Filkins, a cook/baker aboard USNS Comfort (right), presents a poem he wrote about the terrorist attack titled "In Memory Of" to Rear Adm. David L. Brewer III, USN, Commander, Military Sealift Command, during Adm. Brewer's visit to Comfort in New York City Sept. 27. The poem reads: "They took a bite out of our Big Apple, And busted a branch off our cherry tree, We will all remember the men, women and children, The heroes of flight 93, Who gave their lives in Pennsylvania To save our capital, Washington, D.C. You may laugh in our faces and spit in our eyes, But you will never make America die..."

EUROPE NEWS

Rear Adm. John M. Stewart, USNR, relieved **Rear Adm. Robert M. Clark, USNR**, as **Commander, Military Sealift Command Atlantic (Mobilization)**, and **Commander, Military Sealift Command Europe (Mobilization)**. Rear Adm. Clark's next duty assignment is as the deputy commander of the U.S. Second Fleet.

MSC Europe welcomed MSC Office Northern Europe's operations officer, **Paul Weitenberg**, back in September; Weitenberg had spent six weeks on medical leave.

MSC Europe welcomed **YNC(SW/PJ) Dwight Scott, USN**, MSC Europe's new Command Chief, who assumed duties from **YNC(AW) Earl Gray, USN**, who reported to the Afloat Training Group in Yokosuka, Japan.

Sealift ships kept busy in September, supporting the move of a fleet hospital and construction equipment for the Seabees and others.

Chartered MV Merlin moved a prepositioned fleet hospital Sept. 10-21 at Bogen Bay, Norway, to support Exercise Trident Arch. The move included a reserve team from Naval Cargo Handling Battalion 13, based in Gulfport, Miss.

Meanwhile, chartered ship MV Germania loaded Seabee construction equipment and supplies destined for equatorial Africa Sept. 12-13 at Rota, Spain. The ship off-loaded Sept. 24-25 at Owendo, Gabon, to support a Seabees West African training cruise and humanitarian mission.

Oiler **USNS Leroy Grumman** conducted underway replenishment operations with seven U.S. Navy ships including combat stores ship **USNS Sirius**.

Oiler **USNS Laramie** conducted

underway replenishment operations with six Navy ships, including Sirius.

Sirius conducted underway replenishment operations with five Navy ships including **USNS Laramie** and **USNS Leroy Grumman**.

Ocean surveillance ship **USNS Able** continued operations in the North Atlantic, making a port call Sept. 8-11 at Tromsø, Norway.

USNS Loyal continued operations in the North Atlantic, completing a mid-

tour repair availability Sept. 16-30 at Olavsværn, Norway.

USNS Bold finished operations in the North Atlantic and departed for the United States after a brief port call Sept. 8-9 at Reykjavik, Iceland.

MV Carolyn Chouest also left Europe Sept. 1.

USNS Zeus continued operations in the North Atlantic.

Capt. Wilbur Dahn relieved **Capt. Dan McGuire** as master of **Maritime Prepositioning Ship Squadron One's SS Pfc. Eugene A. Obregon** on Sept. 11. **Capt. Walter Shea** relieved **Capt. Joseph Souza** as master of **SS Maj. Stephen W. Pless** on Sept. 24.

Robin Cook, operations support

assistant at MSC Europe, is taking over for departing **Victoria McNamara** as the reserve affairs coordinator. The command also bid farewell to **YN3 Johnny Smith, USN**, and **SK1 Ed Ayke, USN**.

Capt. Gary J. Ellis, USN, Commander, MSC Europe, presented the Navy Achievement Medal to Ayke marking his end of tour and outstanding service to the command. Ayke reports to USS Bonhomme Richard, based in San Diego. Congratulations to MPSRON One's **ET2 Mateo Renteria, USN**, who re-enlisted in the U.S. Navy on Sept. 4.

PACIFIC BRIEFS

SK1(SW/AW) Roni Lazaro, USN, Logistics Directorate, received his fourth Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his outstanding service aboard USS Dubuque from October 1999 to May 2001. According to the citation, Lazaro saved his ship more than \$50,000 in operating funds in fiscal years 2000 and 2001 as the material requisition file clerk and urgent material expeditor. This cost savings enabled the command to procure additional critical parts and services to maximize customer service support and mission readiness.

Capt. John D. Malone, USN, assumed command of the Medical Treatment Facility aboard hospital ship **USNS Mercy**, relieving **Capt. Katie O'Farrell, USN**. Capt. Malone came to Mercy from the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, where he served as director for medical services, a position he retains while commanding the MTF.

Dr. Malone began his career with the Navy in 1975 and is a Fellow of both the American College of Physicians and the Infectious Diseases Society of

America and a member of the American College of Physician Executives. An associate professor of medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Services, he has written for more than 30 publications.

Lt. Cmdr. Theresa Lewis, USN, relieved **Cmdr. Terryl Stewart, USN**, as the commander of Military Sealift Command Office Pearl Harbor. This is Lewis' second tour with MSC. Her first tour was as the executive officer from May 1996 to July 1999 at MSCO Port Canaveral, Fla.

Lewis comes to MSCO Pearl Harbor from a tour at the Pacific Fleet in manpower and personnel as the assistant distribution officer and manning control authority for officer matters. As the Pacific Fleet joint operations and exercise augmentation officer, she identified and coordinated all Pacific Fleet augmentation requirements for many operations and exercises.

Liz Ramirez of the MSC Pacific security office received an on-the-spot award for her work from April through June 2001. During this period,

Ramirez completed the massive project of replacing all individual identification badges with MSC Pacific badges. She worked with a vendor to successfully implement the approved badge design and planned all the production elements for issuing badges.

Joyce Jurkowski, Comptroller Directorate; Andy Marquez, Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate; Gary Redmond, the command statistician; and **Raymond Sanchez**, the MSC Pacific chief of staff, all received letters of appreciation for their contributions as members of the Command Assessment Team from June 2000 to June 2001. The team initiated 15 command improvement recommendations after analyzing the May 2000 Command Climate Survey. As a result of the team's effort, the May 2001 Command Climate Survey showed significant improvement.

Larcener Williams, Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate, was recognized for her 35 years of civil service; **Cynthia Diaz-Diamond, Operations and Plans Directorate**, received her 20-year pin; and **Arlene Pete, Comptroller Directorate**, was honored for completing ten years of service.

Niagara Falls lends helping hand in East Timor



Elementary school students sit in their recently refurbished classroom in Dili, East Timor.

By Cristina McGlew

In a country tormented by rebellion and instability, the crew of Military Sealift Command's USNS Niagara Falls brought welcome changes to an elementary school in Dili, the capital of East Timor. The ship was scheduled for a community project when she anchored in the port of Dili on July 2.

"Once scheduled, we asked crew members and military detachment personnel for volunteers," said Capt. M.J. Murphy, master of USNS Niagara Falls. "There were approximately 30 volunteers each day for a period of

Sailor from aboard Niagara Falls scouted out possible sites for volunteer work for the ship's return trips, and so began Niagara Falls continuing support of School District One.

On their most recent trip, civilian mariners and military department volunteers spent about seven hours each day performing a multitude of projects. They installed electrical circuit breakers, boxes and wiring, fluorescent lights, power receptacles, overhead fans, bug zappers and door and window security screens on a total of nine classrooms and the school's auditorium.

three days."

Niagara Falls first visited East Timor in late July of 2000 at the request of Commander, Seventh Fleet to back-load equipment used in support of the U.S. mission in East Timor. During that visit, a U.S. Support Group East Timor representative and a

The volunteer work did not stop there.

"We also cleaned the school grounds — an arduous task requiring the removal of three truck loads of rubble and nearly as much garbage," said Chief Engineer Kevin Sorbello who coordinated the on-site activities.

Even the language barrier did not stop this dedicated group of volunteers.

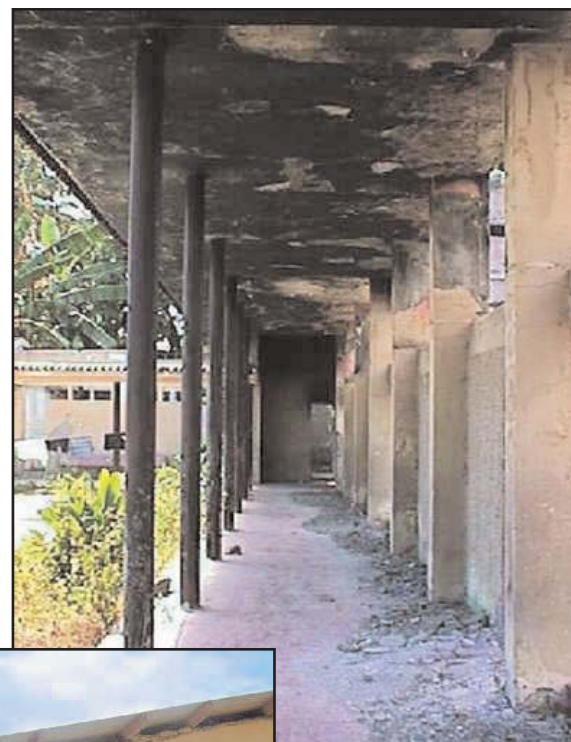
"There was an interpreter on site each time, but there are no real language barriers when you're helping people," Sorbello stated.

U.N. officials, U.S. Group East Timor personnel and local dignitaries praised the ship and her crew for their hard work.

This is Niagara Falls' fourth Dili community relations visit in support of the school. The volunteers have spent about 2,000 work hours bringing the school back on line.

"The people associated with the project expressed their continued pleasure and surprise at both the quantity and quality of work accomplished by Niagara Falls' volunteers during each of their visits," said Capt. Murphy.

"However, the volunteer's greatest satisfaction came from the look on the faces of the students as they sat in freshly painted, well-lit and ventilated classrooms, listening to their teachers and the sound of chalk on the freshly painted blackboards," Sorbello added.



Above: One of the wings of the elementary school in Dili, East Timor, before USNS Niagara Falls crew members and military department personnel began their volunteer renovations.



Left: The same wing of the elementary school pictured above after volunteers from USNS Niagara Falls spent three days completing a multitude of projects in and around the school.



Military Sealift Command Mariner of the Year, Todd Goff, wires the school's auditorium.

They installed decking and tile on the auditorium's stage. They also installed a foundation and shed for water tanks and plumbing and painted the inside and outside of 18 classrooms, the main auditorium and about 2,000 feet of retaining wall encircling the school.

In addition to the volunteer work, Niagara Falls and her crew hosted 15 distinguished guests for lunch July 3 and about 45 guests for tours the following day.

Instability in East Timor climaxed when the nation's citizens voted for independence from Indonesia in a referendum on Aug. 30, 1999. The following weeks erupted in violence, prompting the United Nations to create a transitional administration in East Timor to help bring stability to the fledgling country and rebuild East Timor's infrastructure.

USNS Mohawk completes historic deployment

By Edward Baxter

USNS Mohawk returned to the United States in August, wrapping up a tour that may best be described as historic.

During the year-long deployment to the Mediterranean and Black Seas, Mohawk's embarked divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit Two participated in diving and salvage exercises in ten countries. Exercises took place in Spain, Italy, Egypt, Tunisia, Malta, Turkey and Greece, as well as Albania, Croatia and Bulgaria, supporting NATO's Partnership for Peace — a program designed to foster closer military ties with former eastern bloc nations.

In a personal message to the ship and its crew, Vice Adm. Gregory Johnson, USN, Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, described Mohawk's participation with the Albanian navy as "the most significant

cant exercise of its kind ever conducted there by U.S. military personnel, [that] paves the way for future U.S. exercises in this increasingly important bilateral relationship."

If that weren't enough, divers also qualified three diving supervisors, two recompression chamber supervisors and four recompression chamber inside tenders during their deployment.

Divers HT1(DV) John Coffelt, USN, and BM1(DV) Mark Slade, USN, both passed a rigorous exam, which included a 100-question essay test and a two-hour oral examination, to qualify to supervise Navy dives in depths of up to 300 feet.

HM2(FMF/DV) Larry Griffith, USN, and MR1(SW/DV) Ken Riendeau, USN, qualified as recompression chamber supervisors. Divers suffering from decompression sickness, commonly called 'the bends,' are placed under

pressure in these chambers. The petty officers are responsible for the safe operation of the recompression chamber and the care of the patient in the event of dive casualties.

Five other divers also qualified as recompression chamber inside tenders, 'riding' in the recompression chamber to provide on-site medical care as the patient recovers.

The unit qualified the first diving salvage warfare specialist in the Navy. Aside from becoming a master diver, this is the highest qualification obtainable for Navy divers and is considered a major milestone in their careers. The first two divers to achieve this prestigious level at MUDSU Two are HTC(DSW/SW/DV) Michael Buckley, USN, the detachment's leading chief petty officer, and BM2(DSW/SW/DV) Anthony Sutton, USN.

Mohawk also participated in mine-

laying exercises and the salvage of a U.S. Navy watercraft off the coast of Sardinia.

"Congratulations on a job well done," said MSC Europe's commander, Capt. Gary J. Ellis, USN. "Your mission is diverse, but critical to the Navy's mission. Here, you are truly the ambassadors of the fleet."

USNS Mohawk became a leader in our peace through presence initiatives," Vice Adm. Johnson said. "You can be proud of your significant contributions to peace and stability in this vital region."

"We're having a beautiful [Atlantic] crossing, and the crew is anxious to return home," said Mohawk's master Capt. Charles Rodriguez, speaking by satellite phone. "But, a few of us feel like we left the party just as it was getting started."